

REMARKS

Claims 1-21 are pending in this application.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-21 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over European Patent Publication No. 0621648 to Ikeda et al. (Ikeda). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Ikeda does not disclose a method of manufacturing a fuel cell having a step of forming a conductive layer on an electrolyte layer such that a portion of the conductive layer formed on the electrolyte layer is discrete from a portion of the conductive layer formed inside the pores of the electrolyte layer, as recited in independent claim 1.

The Office Action asserts that Ikeda discloses this feature because Ikeda teaches using similar deposition techniques (i.e., sputtering, ion plating, vacuum deposition etc.). Although Ikeda may teach using similar deposition techniques, Ikeda does not disclose using those techniques as claimed to result in the specific configuration recited in claim 1. To the contrary, as argued in the February 6, 2009 Amendment, Ikeda teaches away from this feature because Ikeda teaches coating every surface of the three-dimensional structure with the active material to form an electrode. Ikeda discloses that this results in improved adhesion between the support structure and the active material and a stronger support structure (see page 3, lines 22-24). Additionally, deposition in Ikeda is carried out on a plastic substrate (electrode) alone. As such, Ikeda teaches using a vapor phase plating technique "to form a metal layer covering all lattice surfaces of the substrate" (see page 3, line 34). Further, Ikeda discloses using ion plating to deposit metal over the entire surface including "a lattice surface at the deepest core" (see page 3, lines 50-54).

By disclosing that metal is plated "at the deepest core" and on "all lattice surfaces of the substrate," Ikeda does not disclose, suggest or render obvious a discrete separation between a conductive layer formed inside the pores of an electrolyte layer and another portion of the conductive layer.

As such, it would be impossible for Ikeda's configuration to provide the combination of features recited in independent claim 1, including an electrolyte layer that is discrete from a portion of a conductive layer.

If Ikeda's configuration were modified in the manner proposed by the Office Action, a Pd layer would be formed on the surface of the electrolyte layer and inside the pores (entire surface). Consequently, the electrical insulation between the surface of the electrolyte layer and the inside of the pores will not be achieved.

Further, the Office Action states that Ikeda discloses a similar deposition technique to form a Pd layer. However, Ikeda carries out deposition on the three-dimensional network plastic substrate alone. Accordingly, Ikeda does not carry out a method of forming a conductive layer on an electrolyte layer as recited in independent claim 1.

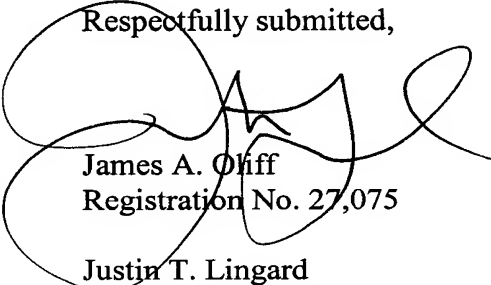
Therefore, Ikeda does not disclose, and would not have rendered obvious, a method of manufacturing a fuel cell that includes a step of forming a conductive layer on an electrolyte layer such that a portion of the conductive layer formed on the electrolyte layer is discrete from a portion of the conductive layer formed inside the pores of the electrolyte layer, as recited in independent claim 1.

Therefore, independent claim 1 and dependent claims 2-21 are patentable over Ikeda. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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